

Georgia Tech Foundation Speech

Good Morning. I am pleased to be meeting with the Georgia Tech Foundation early in my presidency so that we can begin immediately to set an agenda for the future.

It is clear from my reading that the Georgia Tech Foundation has played an invaluable role in elevating the stature of this institution by raising private funds and by leveraging those funds through astute investments and wise management. As a result, you have given this institution a chance to compete in selective areas with the finest universities in the country. In addition, the Foundation's willingness to ask tough questions about the allocation of funds and to evaluate the effectiveness of programs funded through unrestricted income has helped us keep faith with our donors, encouraged strategic thinking, and, as I understand it, made for some lively discussions.

The question before us today is how you and I can work together to allow this organization to be an even greater foundation for future success. I will begin with what I see as my obligations to you.

What I must provide, first and foremost, is clear institutional direction. Where is Georgia Tech going and why? How do internal competencies relate to external opportunities? What trade-offs must we make to achieve our goals? What are the obstacles before us? To what external realities must we adjust? In short, I must provide you with a thoughtful and workable strategic plan and indeed that has been my first order of business. A strategic plan will provide us:

- a stronger sense of institutional purpose,
- a more rational allocation of limited resources,
- the establishment of performance measures and incentives,

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- the ability to mobilize resources and develop the necessary consensus around critical issues,
- the ability to determine a division of labor among campus units and among major advisory boards,
- and a better-honed competitive edge.

It is clear from my interactions with Chancellor Portch and from my meetings with state governmental officials and prominent alumni that we will be expected, now more than ever, to go beyond stating our needs and generating wish lists. We must show that selective investments in this institution, whether they come from the public or private sector, will be leveraged into tangible gains. We must show that our agenda has not been developed in isolation but in response to the needs and aspirations of those who support us. We must pay closer attention to external factors and be willing to adjust to them. Indeed those institutions that show the greatest ability to listen, respond, and deliver on external expectations will emerge at the forefront of higher education in the next century.

While I can set direction, you must help us make sure that we have scanned the environments that we must operate in and that we are moving ahead in a way that can be understood by our various audiences. I should point out that strategic planning is not a one-time phenomenon. We cannot seek your advice in the development of our plan, then curl back into a cocoon of self-contentment. We must continue to interact with you and ask that you continue to provide practical and pointed advice as we attempt to translate our strategic plan into a sustained strategic direction that yields consistent gains.

I know of no more effective case statement for a capital campaign than a first-rate strategic plan. With such a plan in place, we will be ready to move into the more active phases of a capital campaign. It is my intention to accelerate planning for the campaign as soon as we have our institutional priorities set. Concurrent with implementing a strategic planning review, I have met with many major donors and prospects and will continue to carve out considerable time on my calendar for that purpose. In the process, I am working with Jim Langley, Ron Harding, and many of you to identify alumni capable of assuming top leadership

positions in our campaign. I also expect to meet with major prospects and begin the process of securing commitments in the first formal phase of the capital campaign. I am, therefore, ready, willing, and able to provide direction for this campaign and to dedicate myself to the task of broadening our base of private support.

I fully recognize the singularity of the opportunity before us. We offer:

- a focused technological mission at a time when the world's economy is becoming increasingly technologically driven,
- a reserve of great human talent and potential in a student body that boasts the highest average SAT scores of any public university in the country.
- a reputation for adding educational value through a relevant and rigorous curriculum taught by an outstanding faculty,

- research that spans the spectrum from basic to applied, from idea to prototype, creating new fields of knowledge and innovations as we go,

- a well-developed public service network that allows us to drive economic development in our state and beyond in tangible and concrete ways.

- an extensive array of pipeline programs designed to accommodate the demographic realities of the 21st century, encourage promising students, and contribute to the creation of a more seamless educational system in Georgia.

We offer all this and more at a time when the state's economy is rebounding and when Georgia Tech appears to be well-positioned to secure a greater portion of public funds,

- when the University System has been invigorated with new leadership that promises to bring a renewed commitment to higher

education within Georgia and new respect for our best colleges and universities outside of the state,

- when other universities are recalculating their missions in the face of budget woes, Tech remains one of the few major public universities with the ability to move ahead aggressively and gain considerable ground in the next few years,

- when employers are narrowing the recruiting to more focused efforts at fewer schools and invariably naming Georgia Tech as one of those few,

- and when we are moving toward an international event that will allow us to achieve global recognition.

The convergence of institutional competence and relevance with external opportunities has never been greater. We must seize the moment by moving forward with an institutional advancement campaign, one designed to both strengthen our reputation and expand our human and financial

supply lines. Clearly, we cannot make the most of this time without your help. In particular, we need you:

- to continue to set an example for the rest of Tech community through your personal generosity and fund raising assistance. We need each and every member to express their commitment to the future of Georgia Tech and to act as our ardent ambassadors within your spheres of influence,
- to assume the highest responsibility possible in the leadership of the capital campaign,
- to identify, indeed guide and mentor, young leaders and future Foundation members so that this institution will always be blessed with prominent and effective volunteers,
- and to work with me as major stockholders to realizing our strategic vision and to manage our resources wisely.

I know the significance and reputation of this board, not only within the Georgia Tech community but in the city, state, and beyond. The power of your example may be greater than you realize. We need that example as we seek to fulfill our obligations to this institution. The opportunities that will present themselves in the next few years are not a matter of good luck. They have been made possible through the hard work of many people for more than a hundred years. The luck that we seem ready to enjoy is the culmination of efforts that began with our founders, that continued with the faculty and administration who determined this institution would make a name for itself by setting a higher standard, by expecting more of itself and its students. With that standard in place, a powerful work ethic evolved and was embodied by many of the figures that shaped the character of Georgia Tech. When exposed to the rigorous environs of Tech, students grumbled, grouched, and talked of “getting out” including a young man from Douglas who passed through in the early sixties. Yet once they got out, Tech grads came back and gave back in remarkable numbers. They became the most dedicated volunteers and the most generous alumni of any public university in the country. The founders of the Roll Call and the first trustees of the Foundation decided

that the fate of their school should not reside exclusively in the hands of elected politicians and began to give their hard-earned money back to the school. They gave because they believed the school was capable of being more than state funds would allow. And they were right.

The opportunities we have been presented are made possible through the great effort of many faculty, students, administrators, alumni, elected leaders, and others. The effort they put forward allowed the institution to rise to the top of the national polls, to stand shoulder to shoulder with larger institutions that could command far greater resources. Through hard work, uncanny leverage, and strategic investments, those who came before us created an institution that practiced what it preached. They helped pull an institution up by its boot straps and to give it a drive and determination to succeed.

As a new president, I feel a great sense of gratitude for what we have inherited. I also feel a tremendous obligation to make the most of that inheritance, to keep faith with those who gave so much and who worked so hard, to contribute as much as I can so that I can pass on a stronger

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institution to my successor, just as every president before me has done. I know you feel the same. Let us make the most of the opportunities before us. For those who worked so diligently to make these opportunities possible, we can do no less.